HARING CENTER
FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



Inclusionary Practices and Systems:

EMBEDDED INSTRUCTION IN PRESCHOOL

WHAT IS EMBEDDED INSTRUCTION?

Embedded instruction is an effective way to support young children's learning and development in preschool. This approach involves intentionally and systematically integrating learning opportunities into everyday classroom routines, transitions, and activities. It starts with the teaching team identifying each child's unique interests, needs and skill levels, and then setting a specific learning goal or objective. The team then plans and implements various learning opportunities during routine activities, monitoring the child's progress and adjusting instruction as needed.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF USING EMBEDDED INSTRUCTION?

Embedded instruction allows early childhood educators to tailor instruction to each child's individual interests, needs, and abilities. By building on children's strengths and embedding learning in familiar, everyday activities, children are more motivated and engaged in their learning. This approach not only supports skill development, but also enhances communication, social skills, and reading abilities. Additionally, educators can collaborate with families, helping them apply the strategy at home during daily routines.

EXAMPLES OF EMBEDDED INSTRUCTION:

Snack time: During snack, educators can encourage children to count the number of food items in their snack or identify the color of the foods they are eating.

Dramatic play: During dramatic play, educators can encourage children to engage in role play, problem-solving, and social communication (e.g., asking to take turns with items).

Clean-up time: During clean up, educators can embed learning opportunities by having children sort items by size, shape, or color.

Storytime: During book reading, educators can embed learning opportunities by asking children questions about the story, having them make predictions, and helping them identify a character's emotions.

CASE STUDY: EDWIN PRATT EARLY LEARNING CENTER

The Edwin Pratt Early Learning Center in Shoreline, WA, is a fully inclusive Early Learning Center. The center serves four district programs (tuition-based preschool, early childhood special education and Head Start/ECEAP) in blended programs with braided funding. Opened in 2019, Edwin Pratt's classrooms incorporate child-centered, inclusive, and educationally enriching instruction.

At Edwin Pratt, all classrooms implement embedded instruction. The process of planning instruction around student goals, and embedding that instruction throughout the entire school day, ensures that all staff at Edwin Pratt work together to support students' progress. By integrating learning opportunities into different parts of the day, students have more chances to practice and reinforce their skills. This approach leads to faster skill development and better retention for all students.

The teaching team, consisting of teachers, instructional assistants, special education staff, therapists, and family members, first work together to understand each child's needs. Families contribute valuable insights through tools like Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ), "All About Me" projects, and ongoing conversations.

Next, the team identifies a learning goal and integrates it into daily classroom routines. Collaboration is key at Edwin Pratt, with teachers and specialists scheduling regular time to plan and implement these opportunities using **Activity Matrices**.

Finally, they monitor the child's learning progress and adjust the instruction accordingly. The Edwin Pratt early learning team uses resources like the **Teaching Strategies Dashboard**, which provides online access to tools such as lesson planning and assessment tools to track children's development.

Time	Activity	CC (Adapt, Com, Soc)	KC (Com, Soc)	SP (Com, Soc)	OV (Com, Soc)
9:00 - 9:20	Arrival/Wash Hands/Breakfast	Self-Help Routines (coat/backpack, handwashing (Level 3)	Sustain interactions with peers at least 4 exchanges)	Follow classroom routines (Level 3) Respond to peer using words or gestures (80% or more)	Use Strategies to enter groups of 1-2 children (Level 4)
9:20 - 9:40	Circle	Follow circle time routine, remain with the group Use Regulation Strategies	Offer ideas, complete leadership job	Follow classroom routines (Level 3)	Use Regulation Strategies (Level 4)
9:40 - 10:40	Choice	Use Strategies to enter groups of 1-2 children Use Regulation Strategies (Level 3)	Sustain interactions with peers at least 4 exchanges)	Respond to peer using words or gestures (80% or more)	Use Strategies to enter groups of 1-2 children (Level 4) Use Regulation Strategies (Level 4)
10:50 - 11:25	Outside	Use Strategies to enter groups of 1-2 children	Sustain interactions with peers at least 4 exchanges)	Respond to peer using words or gestures (80% or more)	Use Strategies to enter groups of 1-2 children (Level 4) Use Regulation Strategies (Level 4)
11:25 - 11:30	Transition/Wash Hands	Handwashing (Level 3)		Follow classroom routines (Level 3)	Use Regulation Strategies (Level 4)
11:30 - 11:45	Small Groups	Use Strategies to enter groups of 1-2 children	Sustain interactions with peers at least 4 exchanges)	Respond to peer using words or gestures (80% or more)	Use Strategies to enter groups of 1-2 children (Level 4) Use Regulation Strategies (Level 4)
11:45 - 11:55	Circle	Follow circle time routine, remain with the group Use Regulation Strategies	Offer ideas, complete leadership job	Follow classroom routines (Level 3)	Use Regulation Strategies (Level 4)
11:55 - 12:00	Dismissal	Self-Help Routines (coat/backpack) Level 3) Use Regulation Strategies (Level 3)		Follow classroom routines (Level 3)	

RESOURCES

1. Sandall, S. R., Schwartz, I. S., Joseph, G. E., & Gauvreau, A. N. (2019). *Building blocks for teaching preschoolers with special needs* (3rd ed.). Brookes Publishing.
2. Division for Early Childhood. (2014). *DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education.* http://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices.